

House Research Act Summary

CHAPTER: 2

SESSION: 2015 Regular Session

TOPIC: Disaster relief

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Overview

This act provides state disaster relief to eligible entities. It authorizes financial aid to eligible local governments and American Indian tribes; matches federal transportation dollars for road and bridge repair; and funds erosion, sediment, and water quality cost-share projects on private land. Eligibility for erosion, sediment, and water quality cost-share projects is limited to projects that benefit the 37 counties and three tribal areas included in Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster DR-4182 (June-July 2014 storms).

In 2014, the legislature established the disaster assistance contingency account to provide (1) matching money for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance to qualifying public entities in presidentially-declared major disaster counties, and (2) state disaster aid under a new state program that reimburses local units of government and American Indian tribes for eligible costs if the entities sustained significant damage but were not eligible for FEMA assistance. Under item (1), funds in the contingency account are available to assist eligible entities located in any presidentially-declared major disaster area – i.e., eligibility is not limited to the most recent major disaster.

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- 1** **Disaster contingency account; appropriation.** Appropriates \$9,635,000 onetime from the general fund to the disaster assistance contingency account. By law, this money would be available to the Department of Public Safety to (1) match FEMA assistance provided to state agencies, local units of government, and American Indian tribes that sustained eligible damages within presidentially-declared major disaster areas, and (2) assist local units of

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government and American Indian tribes that are eligible under the new (2014) state-only disaster assistance program described in the overview above.

- 2 **Transfer and cancellation of unexpended appropriations.** Transfers unexpended 2011 disaster relief appropriations to the disaster assistance contingency account. This money would also be available to the Department of Public Safety for the purposes described above. Cancels \$12,865,000 of unexpended 2012 disaster relief appropriations to the general fund.
- 3 **Department of transportation; appropriation.** Appropriates \$3 million onetime from the general fund to the Department of Transportation to match federal aid to repair local roads and bridges damaged by flooding in June 2014.
- 4 **Board of Water and Soil Resources.** Appropriates \$2,476,000 onetime from the general fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for erosion, sediment, and water quality cost-share projects that benefit the 37 counties and three tribal areas that are included in Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster DR-4182 (2014).
- 5 **Effective date.** This act took effect on January 28, 2015, the day after it was signed into law by Governor Dayton.